2006

massachusetts college of art

mfa
graduate
thesis
shows

2006

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2006 MFA Graduate Thesis Shows

First Show
April 12 – April 22
Reception April 13

Second Show
April 26 – May 6
Reception April 27

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Morgan McKeehan painting 16
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Paine and Bakalar Galleries
Hours: Monday through Friday 10am-6pm
Saturday 11am-5pm

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. Dates are subject to change. For current information, please call the Exhibitions and Visiting Artists hotline: 617-879-7333 or visit www.massart.edu.

Massachusetts College of Art
621 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

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"In the stride of an utterance"

Mary M. Anderson Graduate Faculty, Massachusetts College of Art

"The word is an abyss through which the speaker strides. One should speak words as if the heavens were opened in them. And as if it were not so that you take the word in your mouth, but rather as if you entered into the word."[1]

It may appear paradoxical to introduce these collective images, primarily visual representations, with an epigraph whose content seems to be centered on words, on the nature and potential of language. Yet it is precisely this paradox of image and word and its integral address, that is being called for here in our attempt to see the work of art and its sounding in this contemporary world. When Martin Buber offers us an image of the word as "an abyss through which the speaker strides," we are brought into contact with the gravity of speech, its sheer import, its indeterminate reach — all of which distill an infinite expanse into our human proportion. "One should speak words as if the heavens were opened in them," writes Buber, drawing into one another the image of an abyss and that of the heavens, two seemingly opposite realms now convergent in the stride of an utterance, in the invocation of a word. Guiding our eyes to the spatial, environmental and thus, ethical scale of the word, Buber instructs attention to our intent in speaking, "not so that you take the word in your mouth, but rather as if you entered into the word." Recognizing the world-making nature of speech, not as an instrument to appropriate but as a domain into which we enter and interact, Buber's words offer an aperture into the ethical substance of language and of all human expression.

1. Martin Buber, "The Life of the Hasidim (1908)," The Martin Buber Reader, Essential Writings, ed. Asher Biemann (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), p. 80.

Can we then ask what it would mean *to see*, not so that you take the image in with your eyes, but rather as if you entered into the image? What could this manner of perceiving be, "to enter into an image," not as an act of appropriation but as an event of witness, a dynamic reception that opens the essential structure of perception to the primacy of relation — a being seen within the very act of seeing? Each image here — be it filmed, painted, digitized, photographed or designed, cast in the concrete elements of earth or forged in the tangibility of sound — bears this potential for witness, affording a proximity between self and other which can invert the stability of figure and ground. The *work* of art is located in this specific effort: to lay bare the intimacy of perception and the integrity of its intersubjective ground, a ground which hazards the paradox of transcendence by engaging the immanent face of matter.

"To enter into an image" may then open the subject and the ambivalent field of representation of which it is a part, to the reciprocity of revelation — a dialogical seeing which touches the other making it "fully credible that we are part of the visible world."[2] Representation exposes our dependence on this credible witness; it succeeds in offering it first, to the artist whose inquiry constitutes the work's *raison d'être*, and thereafter to successive viewers. Seizing the invisible of this world by lending it im/perceptible form, frame, function, the *work* of art apprehends the possible, extending it to those who have eyes to hear and ears to see, that its belief may become ours as we suffer its optimism, succumb to its gravity, grow humble in bearing the sheer import of its indeterminate reach. In this empathic relation of image and word, figure and ground, the work of art donates itself to this potential event wherein *to see* reveals its ethical urgence, placing the image and thus ourselves both more deeply *in* the world and "into question."[3]

2. John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Penguin Books and BBC, 1977), p. 9.

3. Cf. Emmanuel Levinas: "One comes not into the world, but into question." "Ethics as First Philosophy," The Levinas Reader, ed. Seàn Hand (Oxford/Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), p. 81.

Looking then at contemporary art and the wake of its current trend, might we consider entering these images in response to their aesthetic and ethical appeal? An appeal rendered more poignant in an age and culture where the privilege of perception is consumed and terrorized, if not by the spectacle of televised war then by the ironic violence of "reality TV." Might representation permit entry to an originary sight, where *to see* acknowledges the imbrication of aesthetics and ethics, that "to look is an act of choice,"[4] one which jeopardizes the insular provocations of art in order to enlarge its capacity to stride through the abyss speaking "as if the heavens were opened" by the act of creation itself? In the audacity of thinking such value and responsibility for the work of art, these images before us offer witness to its possible truth: in a stillness that unearths the obsolete senses of *regard*, as in 'to face' and 'to keep'; in a polyphony of color whose industry measures exponential relation into analogical populations; in a line that fathoms memory's failure into a blueprint for time, drawing absence into its present sense; in the hesitant camouflage of a face, facing us, whose eyes unflaggingly pray their fragility into ours. Can an image place us in question with the humanity of a surface, its laborious calibrations so dependent on dark and light that it reminds us of the *value* of effort and the integrity of *value*, its visible aspect justifying the word, disclosing its political misuse? *This* is the work of art and it can continue to be, for the authority of art is not dependent on current or trend. It is dependent on your choosing to look, not solely that you take the image in with your eyes, but rather as if you entered into the *work*.

M. M. Anderson
Cambridge, MA
January 29, 2006

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4. John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Penguin Books and BBC, 1977), p. 8.

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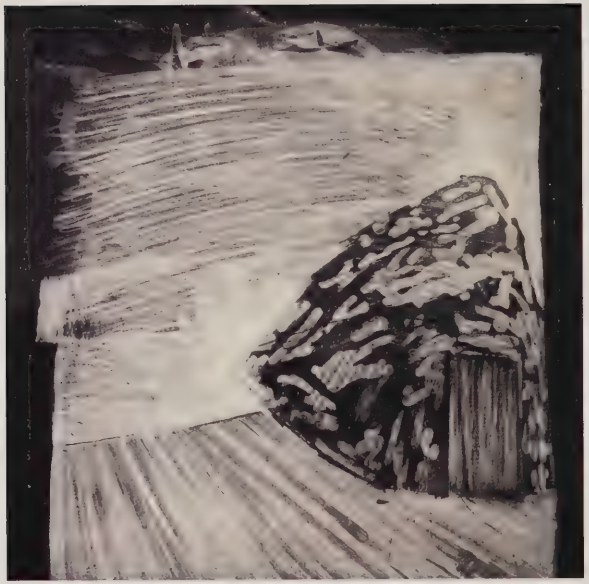
2006 mfa graduates



Untitled, 2005, drypoint, aquatint, white ground with chine collé

NICOLE CRANMER

Untitled, 2005, oil on canvas

Untitled, 2005, oil on canvas

JUSTIN C. KNAPP

Gun Cabinet, 2006

Tom Francis, 2005
video stills from a performance

ROBERT LOMBLAD

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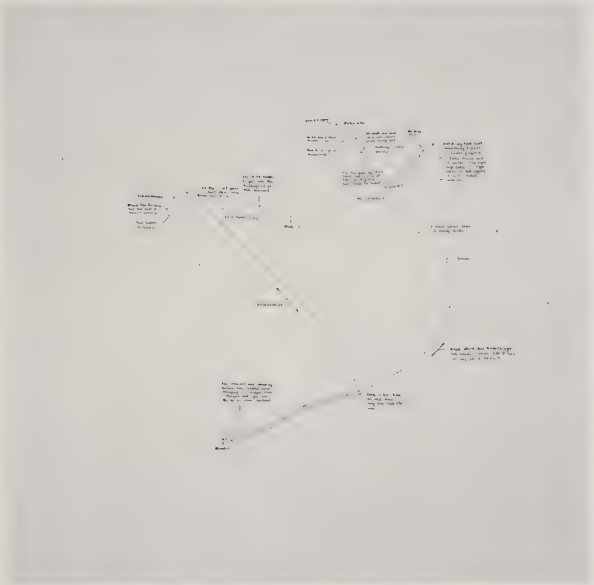
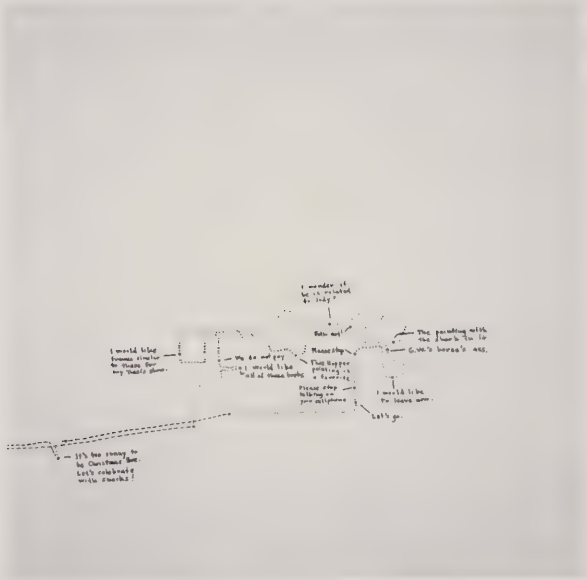
locate (lō' cāt) *v.tr.*

1. To determine or specify the position or limits of.
2. To find by searching, examining, or experimenting.
3. To place at a certain location; station or situate.



20 December 2005, ink on paper, 20 x 20"


I wonder if he is related to Indy?
Hello mat
The sparkling with the Jewels on it
G.W.'s horse's ass.
I would bring Veronica sinclair to thank her very much! glasses.
We do not pay
Thank Heather peterson for all of these books
I would like a flower.
Please stop wasting our telephone
I would like to leave now.
Let's go.
It's too strong to be Christmas! Let's celebrate with friends!

24 December 2005 (detail), ink on paper, 30 x 30"

anchor, 2005, oil on canvas, 12 x 12"

MORGAN McKEEHAN

Untitled, 2005, oil on canvas, 16 x 20"

BRIDGET MULLEN

Sherpa, 2005, acrylic on tar paper, 26 x 22"

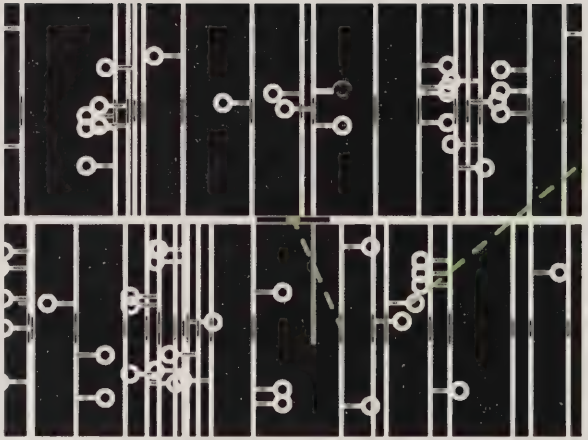
The Environment, 2006, acrylic on tar paper, 36 x 53"

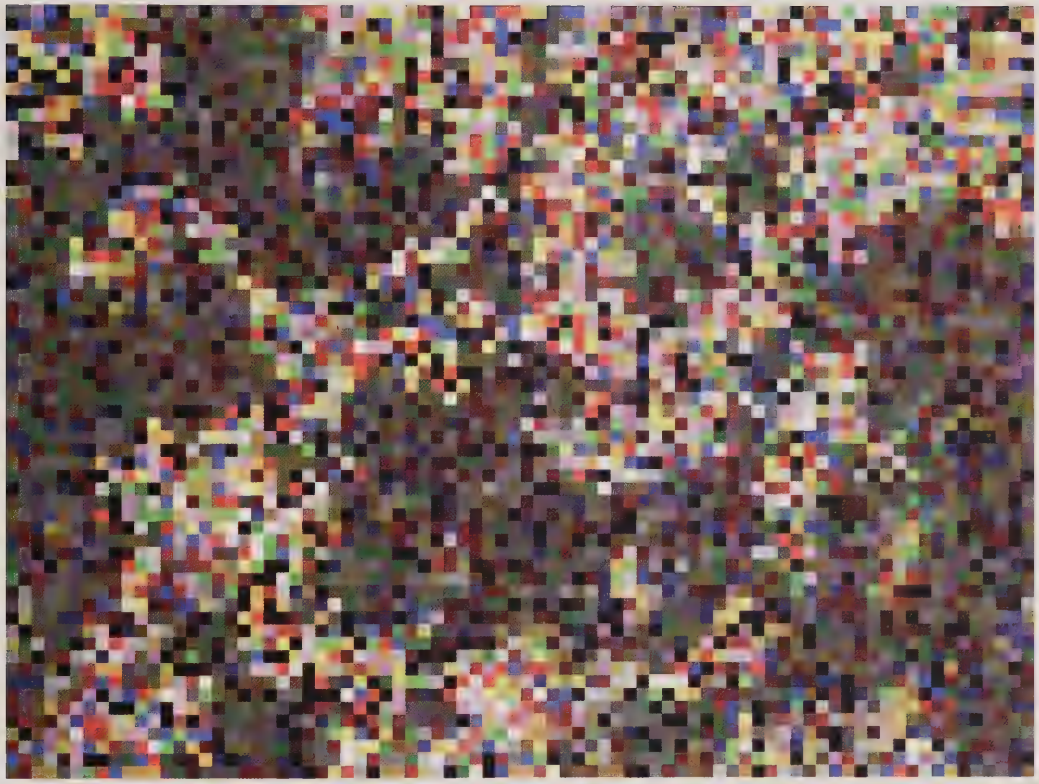
MATTHEW SHANLEY

We don't simply hear music constantly — we are music. Every particle that makes up our bodies is equally a wave. Nothing can be pinpointed to a spot and a time, for matter is always vibrating over a fuzzy range of space *and* time. The physical world is completely and entirely vibration.

To design/construct models is to design/construct thought. To design/construct thought is to design/construct relation in every form it takes. We use models to change/explore ourselves, and thus to change/explore our world.

Relation is fundamental action is fundamental being.





CHRISTOPHER KANE TAYLOR

Compelled to consume, 2005, oil on canvas

Oh lord I forgot to turn off the mean ma'cheen
2005, gouache, acrylic, and oil on canvas

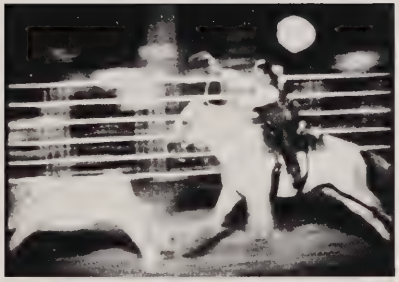
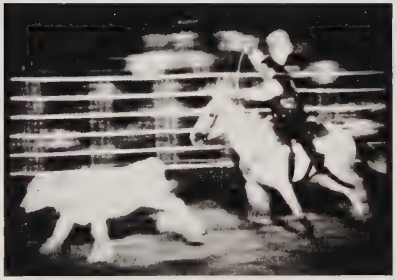
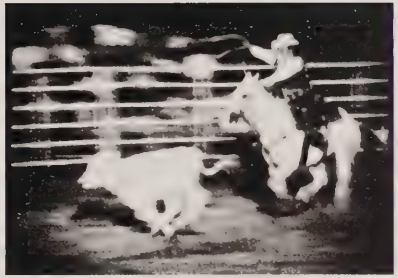
Gamblin cadmium green we see what you're doing
2005, oil, acrylic, wood, cardboard, screw

LANA Z CAPLAN

Charging through life, there may be small victories,
but it is the expenditures that leave enduring holes.

In ruins, we rebuild with memories buried in the foundation is comprised of super 8mm film digitally projected on 3 freestanding screens. The imagery layers and moves between three main components; the world of storms and nature, the rodeo, and streams of people with burn holes in the footage, rising and descending stairs and escalators in New York, London, Paris and Shanghai. The natural world symbolizes the perpetual, the rodeo a metaphor for aspects of experience, such as ambition, compassion, cruelty and commerce and the people with their holes are all individuals, yet remarkably similar. The third projection, circular and set apart from the others, contains murky abstractions of the same footage, representing distortion inflicted within the holes.

In ruins, we rebuild with memories buried in the foundation
2006, Super 8mm stills from a 3-channel installation

JESSICA GATH

Even as water passes over the stones of a river bed
do streams of thoughts through our minds flow

some spoken some felt some unnoticed

Fleeting thoughts
caught

eyes ears nose skin tongue heart
mind to hand to paper

A day's thoughts
recorded
dressed only in the discretion
that passes between the writer's mind and hand

If one second is a glimpse of a day
is one day then a glimpse of a life

writ in water

writ in water, 2006, (installation view)

writ in water, 2006, thoughts on vellum (installation view)

ROBERT KNIGHT

The photographs that make up "Dwelling" focus on the calculated choices people make in the objects they own. What can be deduced about a person from looking at their possessions? What do they care about? Their domestic decisions are both moral and aesthetic: what do they choose to own and how do they choose to display it? My work does not so much attempt to compare classes, or scrutinize one class, as simply attempt to represent identity through the lens of people's personal spaces. I ask the viewer to consider objects I have seen and selected, in the context of an unseen subject's material interests. Whether at one time purchased, received as a gift or inherited, things "shape the identities of their users. Man is ... a reflection of things with which he interacts" (from Csikszentmihalyi's *The Meaning of Things*).

Mr. Stephen G., Boston (South End), MA 2005
from the series "Dwelling"

Mrs. Patricia L., Cambridge, MA 2005
from the series "Dwelling"

Mrs. Carol W., Provincetown, MA 2005
from the series "Dwelling"

Nauli, 16mm still

MELISSA McDOWELL

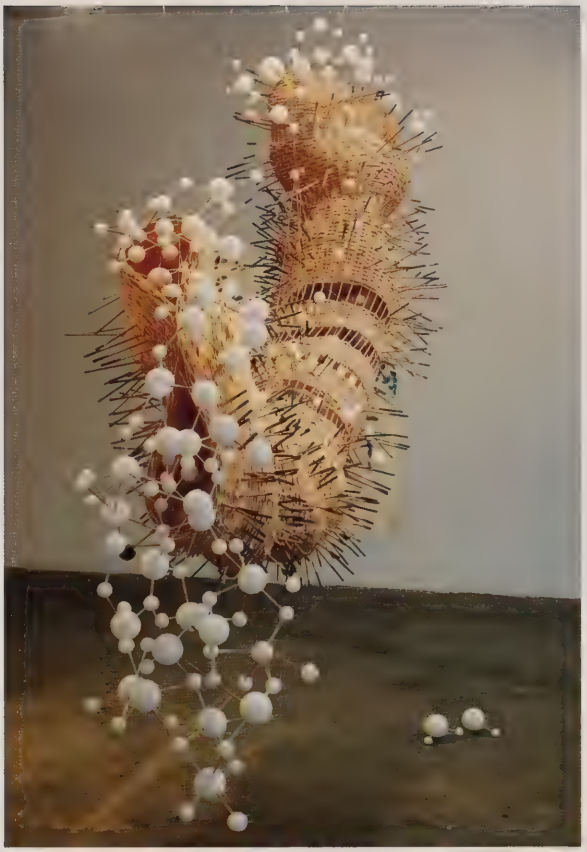
I can't take my eyes off of you, super 8mm stills

NATHALIE JACQUELINE MIEBACH

Navigational Devices – Antarctica/Arctic

Observing the stars at night is an act of slowing down and not looking. Only the brightest stars are revealed through direct observation, most others remain hidden behind a veil of darkness. The stars force you to let go of the focused control of the cones in your retina, and instead ask you to slow down and trust the rods of your peripheral vision to guide you to their light.

My work is a constant redefinition of where and what the peripheral is. As a physical state and as a perceptual standpoint, the peripheral allows me to explore questions that cross disciplinary boundaries, using the language and methodologies of art and science. As I translate scientific data into three-dimensional forms, they become navigation devices that help me understand the relationship between the earth and the stars.



Antarctic Tidal Rhythms, 2006
reed, wood, styrofoam, 72 x 96 x 22"
from the series "Navigational Devices"

Antarctic Tidal Rhythms (detail)

Antarctic Tidal Rhythms (detail)

painting

SARA PETRAS

During A Mood, 2006, oil on paper

Untitled, 2005, aquatint
from the series "Internal Choices"

Untitled, 2005, aquatint
from the series "Internal Choices"

Photography

CAMILO RAMIREZ

If we are a product of our environment, what will happen to us now that our environment is a product of our own design? The urban landscape has become as complex as we are. Its structures mark out everything about our experience as individuals and as a society. It reflects us perfectly. Within this landscape are the physical boundaries that define our daily routines and help shape our way of life. But what evolution has led us to this particular kind of environment?

My current work explores a variety of common urban conventions as they outline our public space and influence the collective perception of our culture. In looking closely at the more pervasive elements of our space, I consider both the potential and limitations of the way we live. Beneath the order and familiarity of our modern rituals is the uncertainty and wonder of a world that is all too familiar.

Highway Ramp, 2005

Apartment Complex, 2005

Elementary School, 2006

CHRISTOPHER WAWRINOFSKY

All civilization is characterized by memory. To memorialize is the traditional function of sculpture. To conquer is not only to control, but to become history's author. Artistic activity has an incessant need for recognition. Therefore, the artistic process becomes a conquest toward a secure placement in history. I create because I want to be survived by things. Consequently, I am using the language of civilization, a language which characterizes a culture that strives to distinguish itself from the primordial ooze that conceived us. I want to rekindle our checkered past.
Out of my quest, flawed beings and monsters emerge. They offer a mirror into this act: to conquer. Sadly, victory does not stand still. Victory favors nothing. Artists are constantly threatened by obscurity, and empires fall.

Canopic Jars, 2005
laser pointer, dry ice, bronze, ceramic jars, masonite
43 x 43 x 36"

Sound Fight: Snowmen Fighting, 2005
forged branches, plaster carrots, sheetrock, house paint, spackle
size varies

CLAIRE BECKETT

CDT Colin Minich, 2005

Camo Netting, 2005

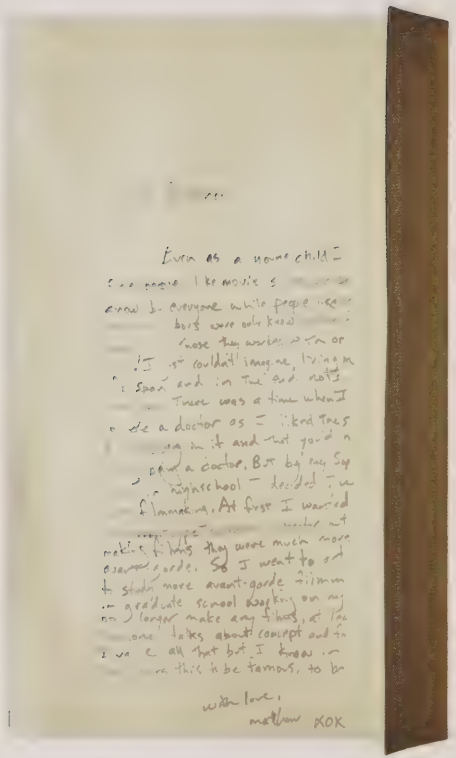
PFC Amanda Withem, 2005

LAUREN BESSEN

To become literate and articulate in the domain of images, to be competent in understanding the structure and nature of visual messages, is to be keenly aware of one's vision. It also means mastering a common set of terms attached to what one sees and creates. Through a series of interactive tools, my thesis investigates how using motion to visualize information can complement traditional approaches to teaching visual literacy. These projects use interactive animation to help demonstrate visual and typographic form. *RandStudio* is a system designed to help students analyze the work of master designer Paul Rand. By letting users manipulate practically all of the visual elements in a series of 10 classic Rand works, my project guides them to discover the formal mechanics behind Rand's refined simplicity.

RandStudio, 2005-2006

MATTHEW LANE



Letter 50, 2005
drawn documentation of the series "letters/strangers"

the artist's beard, 2005

a drawing of "the artist's beard"
11.02.05

a drawing of "the artist's beard"
11.27.05

a drawing of "the artist's beard"
01.04.06

KATE NAZEMI

Inspired by the phonetic poets of the 1920s, who reduced and restructured language to form new relationships between space and time, *Code Performs* looks to modernize these concepts by allowing participants to playfully interact with a programming language to discover its unusual poetic and performative qualities. Participant interaction reveals a changed perspective of code resulting from new relationships between user, typography and sound.

Code Performs, *Delimeter Study*, interactive exhibit

Code Performs, *Sounds of Char*, interactive exhibit

Code Performs, *Compiling Code*, interactive exhibit

LIZ RODDA

For much of my life I have been interested in variations on one theme: beauty. Despite my best efforts to conceal this affair, it has remained constant and elusive. There is conventional beauty and beauty as I know it. It is one I have studied intimately in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* and experienced first-hand. It is a beauty that is informed by the potent and distinctive comparisons between woman and beast. It is a way of knowing that is alluring and grotesque, pure and contaminated, youthful and decayed.

March

The Kind

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Lana Z Caplan

Nicole Cranmer

Jessica Gath

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A special thanks to George Creamer, Dean of Graduate Programs.

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